



ON THE

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# MOVE

Illinois Council 31—American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees—AFL-CIO



## State of **CRISIS**

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## EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

# Another wrong turn?

*Fair pay and a voice on the job make for safer, more secure prisons. Bruce Rauner's out to change that.*



BY  
ROBERTA LYNCH

IN NEW MEXICO, THE OVERWHELMING MAJORITY OF CORRECTIONAL EMPLOYEES LEAVE WITHIN THREE YEARS.

Last year on Mother's Day, a riot broke out at the Tecumseh State Correctional Institution in Nebraska. Inmates took over sections of the facility, set fires, assaulted correctional officers and killed two of their fellow prisoners. After order was restored, state investigators identified "officer shortages and high turnover" as key causes of the riot, according to a recent article in the Wall Street Journal.

SIMILAR PERSONNEL PROBLEMS ARE MOUNTING IN CORRECTIONS DEPARTMENTS AROUND the country, especially in states where correctional employees do not have collective bargaining rights.

The job of a correctional officer is difficult and demanding—and as the US economy has improved in recent years, there are other alternatives available to job-seekers for the same or higher pay.

The plain fact is that in many states, correctional employees just aren't paid enough for the jobs they do. The average hourly wage is just \$21.59 nationwide. In Missouri, correctional officers start at only \$14 per hour.

But in states like Massachusetts, New Jersey and Illinois, the hourly rate starts at \$24 and can rise to more than \$30 over the course of an officer's career.

That's because employees in those states have been able to come together through their union to secure fair wages and step plans that grow their salaries with their experience. That recognition for the skills gained over years on the job is missing in many states. The WSJ reported that poor morale among Nebraska's prison workforce was due in large part to long-time officers earning no more than new recruits.

Working in a prison is flat-out dangerous. Correctional officers have one of the highest rates of nonfatal workplace injuries of any occupational group—mainly due to assaults and other violent acts.

With these kinds of challenging conditions, employees

don't stick around unless there's a strong incentive to do so. But in many states, wages don't increase much over time. In New Mexico, the overwhelming majority of correctional employees leave within three years.

When turnover is high and hiring difficult, there aren't enough staff to do the job and employees are required to work excessive amounts of overtime. That makes a hard job even more difficult and a dangerous job a lot less safe.

In Arizona, correctional employees have sued the state because staffing levels are so low. A deputy warden left alone in the yard with 80 inmates was so badly beaten that he now has two titanium plates in his head.

Few if any of these low-wage, non-union, so-called "right-to-work" states have recognized the obvious: To recruit employees into such demanding jobs, they must pay fair and competitive wages. To retain employees with accumulated skills and knowledge, there must be step plans that allow them to move up the economic ladder over time. And to maintain morale and strengthen commitment, employees need the right to have a union that can enable them to address unsafe and unfair working conditions.

Correctional employees here in Illinois who are members of AFSCME have that voice. Their wages are competitive. They have a step plan that fosters retention. They have decent health insurance and pension benefits that allow dignity in retirement. When problems arise on the job—which they do with frustrating fre-

quency—employees can come together through their union to make their concerns heard. And over decades they've won rights that foster safety on the job, provide opportunities for promotion, ensure fairness in job assignment, and assure assistance in the event of layoffs.

But as it is in so many other respects, today Illinois is moving in the wrong direction when it comes to correctional policies. Governor Rauner is pushing to freeze employee wages and steps for four years, making correctional jobs less competitive. He's trying to drastically increase employee health care costs. He wants to decrease the hours employees are paid for overtime, increasing the incentive for management to mandate excessive amounts of OT. He's demanding so-called "merit" bonuses that will foster favoritism. And he's trying to undermine the ability of employees to come together through their union to have a voice on the job.

Illinois has a highly skilled, committed workforce that maintains order and security in our prison system, despite persistent challenges of overcrowding and lack of staff. But Bruce Rauner's unrelenting hostility to unions, his determination to impose his own harsh economic terms, and his indifference to the dangers faced daily by correctional employees threaten to reverse that progress and plunge Illinois prisons into the disarray that besets a growing number of states. It will be up to all of us to make sure that doesn't happen.



## On the Move

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# Illinois universities in crisis

*Decrying cutoff of state funding, university communities fight back*

Illinois' public universities are at their breaking point after nine months without the state funding that is essential to their operations. Ramifications for the state's higher education system include layoffs and furloughs, drops in enrollment, loss of student financial aid, the threat of accreditation loss, and even the possibility of closure.

GOV. RAUNER CONTINUES TO HOLD THE STATE BUDGET HOSTAGE TO HIS ANTI-WORKER "Turnaround Agenda." Despite freeing up funds for some state functions, he refuses to release funding for higher education and insists they instead rely on cuts to make ends meet.

Without immediate action, death by a thousand cuts may be the story of higher education in Illinois.

The Higher Learning Commission, the accrediting agency for 19 states including Illinois, issued a warning to the governor that universities may lose accreditation if they are forced to suspend operations or close.

"The lack of state funding is putting Illinois colleges and universities at serious risk," said commission President Barbara Gellman-Danley, "and jeopardizing the future of students."

Several Illinois universities have already indicated that they may not be able to continue operations.

## Campuses are communities

AFSCME REPRESENTS CLERICAL staff, building maintenance workers, food service workers and more at universities across the state. As the funding crisis continues, many face the prospect of furloughs and layoffs.

Eastern Illinois University (EIU) laid off nearly 200 non-teaching staff in March. In the process, 65 AFSCME members lost their jobs and Local 981 lost a quarter of its membership.

"These families are losing their income and their health insurance," said Derek Light, former president of the local. "Now there's 177 people looking

for good local jobs but they are few and far between."

As one of the primary employers in the region, the trouble at EIU is not just devastating for students and staff at the university, but the city of Charleston and surrounding towns.

Sophomore Melissa Marban came to EIU for the smaller class sizes. She got active in the protest movement on campus when the building service worker in her dorm hall, AFSCME member Tom Jewell, worked his last day on March 11.

"It's really frustrating that good people like Tom are getting laid off because we aren't getting the funding we need," she said.

## Rallying together

IN ADDITION TO FREEZING OUT universities, Gov. Rauner dealt a blow to low-income students who rely on MAP grants to earn their degree when he vetoed a bill that provided funding for the program.

Protests have sprung up at campuses across the state, drawing attention to the dire plight of the public university system.



Students, faculty, staff and community members rally together at Northeastern Illinois University.



Universities facing a state funding crisis have been forced to lay off employees. The red flags represent 261 laid-off workers at Eastern Illinois University.

AFSCME members are standing with faculty members and others in their university communities to demand that Gov. Rauner stop harming higher education.

At EIU, 2,000 university employees and community supporters held a spirited rally on February 5.

At a much more somber protest on March 9, two days before layoffs took effect, university staff planted 261 flags representing the people who have lost their jobs as a result of the budget impasse.

"We are proud of the work we do for the students," said Renee Kerz, an EIU food service worker for 22 years and recently-elected president of the local. "We are calling on the governor to wake up and give our universities an appropriation."

More than 400 students, faculty and staff packed the auditorium at Northeastern Illinois University (NEIU) on February 25 to demand that Gov. Rauner stop holding uni-



AFSCME member Tom Jewell served as an Eastern Illinois University building service worker for years before he was laid off this March.

versity students and the entire public higher education system hostage.

"We've gathered thousands of signatures on a letter demanding that the governor and the Legislature pass a budget and release funding for higher education," said Local 1989 president, Ellen Larrimore.

"Now we are taking our message to our families, friends and communities," added Linda Loew, the local's solidarity chair and recording secretary.

Tracey Abman, associate director at AFSCME Council 31, addressed a packed crowd at the NEIU rally.

"As we fight together for funding for higher education," Abman said, "let us not fall prey to the corporate elite's attempts to divide us. We must stand

together with those who are struggling because there is no state budget—and those who are standing up to Rauner's wrong priorities."

Ann Zettervall, president of Local 3700, spoke at a rally at the University of Illinois, where more than 2,000 AFSCME members work. She lamented the governor's constant assertions that universities should survive by cuts alone.

"It is outrageous that while people suffer and students face an uncertain future, our state is still ensuring that the wealthiest get their tax breaks," Zettervall told the crowd. "We need to support lawmakers who stand up against Rauner's misguided agenda. By standing together, we can make a difference!"

# Championing working families

*Representative Emanuel “Chris” Welch and Senator Don Harmon, chief sponsors of HB 580, stand up to protect public services*

## Rep. Emanuel “Chris” Welch



### Why do you think HB 580 is important?

I think shutting down government—which Governor Rauner would have no problem doing—is irresponsible.

HB 580 is important because it will keep the parties at the table, keep them negotiating, and at the same time keep government open.

### Why is Gov. Rauner opposed to this bill?

Unions were designed to protect the American worker.

Gov. Rauner is opposed to this bill because he told his right-wing supporters while he was campaigning for the job that he wants to break the union. That’s his ultimate objective.

His strategy in Illinois is part of a national movement by billionaires like Rauner across the country. These guys are going around the country putting in anti-union legislation to drive down wages, increase their profits and make more money. It’s just corporate greed. Plain and simple.

### How can working families and unions block Rauner’s anti-worker agenda?

Vote. Rauner is throwing his wealth around to elect conservative candidates who will help him destroy middle class families.

Elected officials make decisions that impact our daily lives. The only way to be a part of that process is to get out and vote.

### What would you tell state employees who are in this battle?

Gov. Rauner wants to make it just about AFSCME. But it’s really about middle class families and unions all across the state.

Keep your spirits up. The governor has really helped mobilize our base. People are more ready than ever to get out there and vote. Our day is coming.

## Sen. Don Harmon



### Why do you think HB 580 is important?

The traditional bargaining rules, which include the possibility of a strike or a lock-out, have been a moderating influence for other governors and led stakeholders to stay at the bargaining table and negotiate a fair deal.

But this governor seems almost giddy at the prospects of a strike—he seems to relish the opportunity to go to war with the unions representing state workers.

HB 580 is a smart way for us to force moderation by providing an alternative means of resolving an impasse without interrupting state services.

### Why is Gov. Rauner opposed to this bill?

The governor clearly wants unilateral control of this process. He wants to put public workers in an untenable spot where they are forced to choose between a strike or accepting wholly unreasonable terms dictated by the governor.

### What can union members and working families do?

The governor has succeeded in nothing as much as unifying and strengthening working families, the unions that represent them and the politicians that represent them.

People have to understand what’s at stake here. This governor wants to slash wages and benefits and hurt working families. This is a fight about the future of the middle class in Illinois.

### What would you tell state employees who may feel their story isn’t being heard?

I’m sorry for the uncertainties this is creating in your lives. Hang in there. Know that you have allies and advocates in the General Assembly.

But we also need *you*. We need your voices raised. We have try to inch forward and make Illinois a little bit better every day.

We have to stick together.

# Governor vows to veto fair arbitration bill



For the second time, the Illinois General Assembly has approved legislation to provide the option of impartial arbitration for all state contract negotiations. And once again, the governor is expected to veto the bill.

The Senate approved House Bill 580, legislation to provide for impartial arbitration of the current state contract dispute, by a veto-proof majority—but the House did not. AFSCME members are now working to build the super-majority support among state representatives that will be needed if an override motion is to succeed.

When he walked away from bargaining with AFSCME, Gov. Rauner asked the Illinois Labor Relations Board to declare contract negotiations at impasse. If the board rules in his favor, the governor will try to impose his harmful terms on tens of thousands of state workers, with a strike as their only recourse to stop him.

“The best course for ending conflict and addressing the deepening crisis in state government,” said Roberta Lynch, executive director of AFSCME Council 31, “is for the Rauner Administration to return to the bargaining table with AFSCME and to work constructively toward compromise.

“Unfortunately, the administration is instead seeking conflict. That’s why the labor movement supports the fair arbitration bill, the only reliable way to assure a path forward.”

# PEOPLE power beats big money on primary election day

**M**arch 15 might just go down in Illinois history as one of the most significant political defeats yet for the big money crowd. Bruce Rauner and his super-rich associates poured millions into two key legislative races, and ended up losing them both.

WHEN THE DOLLARS ARE FINALLY TOTALED UP, IT'S LIKELY THE WEALTHY CORPORATISTS SPENT as much as \$7 million in just those two races—an amount thought to be unprecedented anywhere in the country.

In the end, though, dark money lies couldn't contend with the truth-telling of small armies of union volunteers, including hundreds of AFSCME members and retirees, who made phone calls night after night and knocked on countless doors, upstate and down.

## Ken Dunkin ousted

IN THE 5TH HOUSE DISTRICT Democratic Primary in Chicago, youth advocate Juliana Stratton overwhelmingly defeated Rauner ally and incumbent state representative Ken Dunkin. The Rauner forces ran an all-out smear campaign against the widely respected Stratton, flooding the expensive Chicago airwaves with one lie after another.

In the end, voters' frustrations with Dunkin's record—including missing key votes to support the fair arbitration bill and prevent cuts to child care—gave Stratton a solid 35-point victory.

"My deep appreciation to all the AFSCME volunteers that made calls, knocked on doors and helped at the polling places," Stratton said in a post-election message to Council 31. "You were there right from the beginning and up to the amazing end. I look forward to working arm in arm with you on the many challenges facing Illinois working families."

## Standing with Sam

VIRTUALLY THE ENTIRE LABOR movement came together to defend Republican incumbent Sen. Sam McCann, whose 50th district covers a swath of central Illinois from the greater Springfield area south to Alton and west through Jacksonville all the way to the Mississippi River.



Glenn Robson of AFSCME Local 2600 knocks on the door of a Local 38 member in Jacksonville while volunteering for Sen. Sam McCann.

McCann has a solid record of supporting public-service workers and retirees and was the lone Republican who stood up to Gov. Rauner and voted in his district's best interest on Senate Bill 1229.

Despite a vicious ad campaign against him by Rauner and his allies, Sen. McCann still managed to beat Bryce Benton, an opponent recruited by Rauner to punish McCann for standing with working families.

AFSCME volunteers from all across central Illinois played a leading role in this key victory.

"I'm honored and proud to represent all working people," McCann said in his victory speech on election night. "I will never vote to take a working person backwards down the ladder. I'm proud to have that opportunity and proud of the votes I've taken."

## Big money can't sell big lies

THIS YEAR'S PRIMARY ELECTION outcomes are widely recognized as a rejection of Bruce Rauner's zero-sum politics.

The governor's camp tried to save face by pointing to various legislative districts where Rauner-backed candidates had won in House and Senate races—but those were almost entirely districts where unions did not get directly involved and where Rauner was backing candidates already favored to win.

Big money can never sell big lies when working people stand up to expose them. And union members were out in force this March.

"I am particularly grateful to AFSCME members who volunteered in recent weeks—it was critical to my strong victory," said Rep. Emanuel

"Chris" Welch of Chicagoland's 7th District. "I am proud to be a champion for working families in Springfield and look forward to battling against the attacks on unions and the middle-class in our state."

AFSCME volunteers also helped Omar Aquino beat Angelica Alfaro, a charter school proponent, in the 2nd Senate District in Chicago. And with AFSCME's support, Cristina Castro scored a big upset in the 22nd Senate District in Kane County. In the 72nd House District in the Quad Cities, union members helped bring home a win for AFSCME-endorsed candidate Mike Halpin.

Halpin summed up the spirit and determination that made AFSCME members critical to winning this important election.

"We absolutely could not have won this race without AFSCME," Halpin said. "AFSCME members at the doors and on the phones provided the core of our grassroots campaign. I'm really proud to have the support of a union that goes the extra mile fighting for working families."

For results in all Illinois primaries where AFSCME made an endorsement, visit [AFSCME31.org](http://AFSCME31.org).



Volunteers, including members of AFSCME Local 2806, outside Juliana Stratton's campaign office in Chicago.

# City of Chicago AFSCME members urge investment in mental health services

*Years of cuts and closures put human lives on the line*

Cuts and closures to public mental health services contribute to homelessness, emergency room visits, psychiatric hospitalizations, incarceration and sometimes tragic consequences as a result of police interventions.

A GROUP OF ADVOCATES FOR ACCESSIBLE COMMUNITY HEALTH SERVICES IN CHICAGO UNVEILED a new plan to address this crisis at a press conference on February 3. Participants included nine Chicago City Council members, AFSCME Local 505 members who work in the city's mental health clinics, and mental health advocates.

"Our members want to prevent any further disruption of the city's vital mental health safety net," AFSCME Local 505 President Cherone Gladney-Morris told reporters. "We are working to pass the Mental Health Safety Net ordi-

nance to enable our mental health clinics to treat more people in neighborhoods of greatest need."

Moved by the fatal shooting in his ward of Quintonio LeGrier, Ald. Jason Ervin is sponsoring the ordinance, which would require the Chicago Department of Public Health (CDPH) to hire an adequate number of psychiatrists, raise revenue by joining Medicaid managed care networks, and launch a community outreach campaign to expand the clinics' reach.

"This ordinance would help to ensure adequate psychiatric

care for those who need it the most," said Ald. Ervin. "There are clear cases where a lack of mental health care has cost human lives—and cost our city millions of dollars. At a minimum, we need to make the very best use of the six clinics our city currently operates."

### Turning people away

AFTER CLOSING HALF OF THE city's mental health clinics in 2012, the Chicago Department of Public Health continues to operate six clinics that provide a vital safety net for those who have few alternatives by



Chicago Alderman Jason Ervin supports accessible mental health services.

**"There are clear cases where a lack of mental health care has cost human lives—and cost our city millions of dollars. At a minimum, we need to make the very best use of the six clinics our city currently operates."**

— Chicago Alderman Jason Ervin



AFSCME Local 505 President Cherone Gladney-Morris and member Robert Steward, a therapist in a CDPH clinic, appear at a City Hall press conference to speak up for the people they serve.

offering individual therapy, group therapy, case management and psychiatric evaluation and treatment.

Robert Steward, a therapist at Englewood Mental Health Center and a member of AFSCME Local 505, is especially concerned about the need for more psychiatrists on staff.

"Every day we get new clients. They made the difficult decision to deal with issues they have been sitting on for a long time—sometimes a lifetime," he said. "But we only have a psychiatrist in the office one day a week."

In addition to his individual therapeutic caseload, Steward runs a life skills therapy group. Clients in the group build their independence and confidence by participating in educational activities and learning how to access resources in the community.

Because the CDPH clinics are not part of a managed care network—something that would be remedied with the ordinance—the clinics receive no reimbursement for services provided to Medicaid recipients in those networks. In some cases, Medicaid recipients have been turned away from the clinics for that reason.

"The next stop for too many of these people is the hospitals, the jails," said Steward. "We need to make sure our safety net is stronger than it is now. People are falling through the cracks."

"I tell my co-workers, we have to make sure City Hall understands how important it is to have a strong mental health system. If you can put \$2 million into plants on Michigan Avenue, you can put money into mental health."

# Caregivers speak out: \$15 for families!

*Direct service personnel want to keep helping individuals with disabilities*

**A**udrey Lake, a member of AFSCME Local 3492 at Ray Graham Association for 12 years, believes that higher wages for caregivers would ensure a stable, quality workforce for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities.

THAT'S WHY LAKE JOINED THE CARE CAMPAIGN, A COALITION EFFORT TO INCREASE STATE PAYMENTS to community agencies for the first time in eight years, including a codified \$15 minimum wage for Direct Service Personnel (DSPs).

"I have to work 70 hours a week just to survive," Lake said. "My ailing father is in the final chapter of his life and my five-week-old grandson is just beginning his life. It's unfair that I don't have time to spend with them. I'm missing out."

Community agencies that serve children and adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities in Illinois are facing the loss of critical funding due to the state budget impasse. At the same time, they are in the midst of a caregiver hiring crisis caused by extremely low wages.

DSPs like Lake help our state's most vulnerable meet basic needs and live their lives

to the fullest potential—but they are paid poverty level wages. These low wages have created disability agency vacancy rates of up to 25 percent. Community-based service providers are struggling to meet their clients' needs without adequate staffing levels, while DSPs work overtime to fill the gaps.

### Taking action, speaking out

"IF I WAS PAID \$15 AN HOUR," Lake said, "I would get to spend more time with my family. But most importantly, the higher pay would allow agencies like mine to attract more staff. It would cut down the high turnover rate and the individuals we support would benefit from more stability in their lives and in their homes."

DSPs from AFSCME locals gathered in workshops across



Audrey Lake (right), a DSP at Ray Graham, shares a moment with her longtime client, Alison Schlichting.

the state in February to make a plan to increase wages for employees of community disability agencies.

Their first step is to meet with legislators and urge them to support House Bill 5931 and Senate Bill 2952, which would increase funding for private disability agencies and require higher wages for care providers.

If successful, the legislation would not only build a stable workforce for people with dis-

abilities, but also ensure that their caregivers can sustain themselves and their families.

### Making a difference in human lives

AUDREY LAKE HAS A CARING relationship with her longtime client at Ray Graham, Alison Schlichting.

Lake helps Schlichting maintain her health and

hygiene, prepare meals and reach personal goals like writing her own checks. She also takes Schlichting on errands and to doctor appointments.

"It's good to see a familiar face in my home," Alison said, looking to her caregiver. "And Audrey—you've helped me a lot."

Lake feels the same way. "I develop a relationship with the people I support," she said. "It's not just me teaching them... I learn from them too."



**ALISHA KALB**

The Hope Institute, Springfield  
12 years of service

I work with children and they look to me as a friendly, loving, constant face. I worked with one client for many years and he became like family to me. When he aged out of the system, I became his legal guardian because he had no one else.



**MARY BORGMANN**

RocVale Children's Home of Milestone Inc., Rockford  
6 months of service

My job makes a difference. I help each child learn and grow. Everyone deserves to feel compassion, companionship and respect. But because of the lack of staff, the children don't get all the care and attention that they need and deserve.



**LEONARD PORTER**

Good Shepherd Manor, Momence  
30 years of service

In me, the residents have a person to depend on. I am never late and I never miss a day of work. I love the work I do. But I have to supplement my wages with more hours and sometimes I'm too tired to give my best performance on a daily basis.

# State of CRISIS

**Governor Bruce Rauner still won't put aside his anti-worker agenda and work with legislators on budget and revenue plans that can pull Illinois back from the brink of social and fiscal chaos.**

The ongoing budget impasse is hurting every AFSCME member no matter where they work: State universities face cutbacks, furloughs and layoffs; city and county governments are struggling to cope with the loss of state grants; human service agencies serving children, the elderly, the disabled and others most in need are being forced to reduce services or even close their doors.

Until Rauner drops his obsession with eliminating public sector unions, the future won't look any brighter.

In his Feb. 17 budget address, "the governor doubled down on his failed priorities," a statement from the labor-community coalition Illinois Working Together said. The coalition's goal is to protect working people from Rauner's wrong priorities.

"As he has for a year, the governor demanded that legislators make changes that hurt all working people—driving down wages, making it harder for injured workers to get the help they need, weakening workers' rights to negotiate together—and threatened even more harmful cuts to health care, higher education, and help for the most vulnerable if he doesn't get his way."

According to Illinois Comptroller Leslie Munger, the state owes \$7.6 billion to service providers whose work is required by court orders—and it owes \$1.3 billion more to vendors that are not subject to a federal consent decree. Munger said she expects unpaid bills to hit \$10 billion by June.

The March primary election demonstrated increasing voter frustration with Rauner's hostage-taking. More and more Illinois citizens are becoming aware that the governor is only interested in his own ideological agenda.

"The way out is for Republican legislators to realize that their constituents are best served by solving the state's revenue shortfall rather than the governor's phony 'Turnaround Agenda,'" AFSCME Council 31 legislative director Joanna Webb-Gauvin said.

"Our government only works when there's a balance of power between the branches," she pointed out. "Until now, almost every Republican legislator has been cowed by the governor's threats, effectively making Illinois a land of one-man rule. That's got to end."



## STOP THE BLEEDING GOV. RAUNER

The list of those harmed by Governor Bruce Rauner's political gamesmanship grows daily—with ever-growing numbers losing jobs, services, and opportunities. In his unrelenting crusade to destroy labor unions, the governor has shown himself only too willing to seriously wound individuals most in need and to damage organizations and institutions essential to our state's social and economic fabric.

- Families' co-pays for childcare have jumped as much as 20% and an estimated 10,000 children are now ineligible.
- 419 state construction contracts remain on hold as a result of the budget crisis.
- More than half of Sangamon County employers report the state budget impasse has hurt sales and profitability.
- The 138-year-old State Museum is closed to the public per the direction of the Governor. The Museum brings in \$33 million in tourism revenue and \$2 million in federal grants, but only costs \$6.29 million to operate.
- According to a September survey, 90% of homeless service providers in Illinois have already or will be forced to decrease or eliminate services.
- The state is not funding training for 57,000 law enforcement officers.
- Nearly 15,000 youth lost access to high-quality Teen REACH after-school services.
- The state stopped funding grants for psychiatrists at community clinics, forcing providers to turn away new patients with serious mental illness.
- Substance abuse programs have been shuttered and treatment for 70,000 Illinoisans are at risk.
- 84,500 seniors have lost Meals on Wheels and other home and community based services.
- TAP (The Autism Program) is not being funded for nearly 1,800 families.
- The state is failing to fund services for 130,000 people living with epilepsy.
- Nearly one-half of county health departments have reduced capacity.
- No state funding is going to breast and cervical cancer screenings.
- Those with HIV/AIDS will no longer receive prescription assistance.



# Creating turmoil in state government

## Rauner seeks to shutter Kewanee Youth Center

Rauner’s FY 2017 budget plan would close down the Illinois Youth Center at Kewanee, a Department of Juvenile Justice facility that houses maximum-security and special-treatment offenders—some of the most violent youth in DJJ. The Administration has not yet put forward a plan to relocate this population, which no other facility now has the capacity to serve or securely house.

The closure of IYC Kewanee and layoff of more than 200 employees would harm the regional economy. While area legislators have been told the facility may be turned over to the Department of Corrections to reduce overcrowding in the adult prison system, no solid commitments have been made.

The closure plan will be reviewed by the General Assembly’s bipartisan Commission on Government Forecasting and Accountability. AFSCME planned to make the case for keeping IYC-Kewanee open at a March 30 hearing as On the Move went to press.



# State museum system dismantled



Last year, the Rauner Administration embarked on a plan to dismantle the prized Illinois State Museum network, shuttering the main museum in Springfield and associated sites statewide, including the internationally renowned Dickson Mounds.

AFSCME filed a grievance and sought an injunction in aid of arbitration to block the planned layoffs of museum employees. The administration entered into an agreement to suspend the layoffs while the arbitration—and any subsequent circuit court appeal—was pending.

At the same time, AFSCME joined with concerned citizens to win passage of Senate Bill 317, sponsored by Sen. Andy Manar, which required the state to reopen and continue to operate all of the Illinois State Museum sites. Rauner issued an amendatory veto to the bill, rewriting it to allow only two museum sites to reopen contingent on them securing private funding.

continued on page 10

# New revenues needed to get Illinois back on track

**To fix the budget, Illinois needs new revenue, not cuts that hurt our state’s future.**

Nearly 70 percent of Illinois voters supported a millionaire’s tax in 2014—more than voted for Rauner himself in the same election—but at no point has the governor asked big corporations or the wealthy to share in the sacrifices that our state’s most vulnerable are being forced to make.

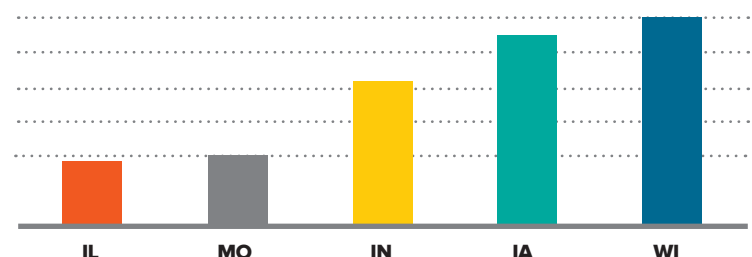
“Bruce Rauner’s agenda is clear,” said Illinois Working Together. “Take from middle class working people in order to reward the rich and powerful.”

“The most straightforward solution is to reverse the \$5 billion individual and corporate tax cut that took place when the five percent income-tax rate expired in 2015,” said Martha Merrill, Council 31 Research Director.

The Center for Tax and Budget Accountability, a non-partisan research group, suggests other options, including expanding the sales tax to services and closing wasteful corporate tax loopholes.

Most basically, Merrill said, Illinois needs to restructure its tax system to make it fairer. “The state constitution should be amended to replace the flat tax with a fair tax,” Merrill said. “Illinois could raise

Midwest States Tax Comparison



This chart depicts the total taxes collected in Illinois—and how that total compares to neighboring states—from individual income, corporate income, retirement income and sales taxes. Source: Illinois Economic Policy Institute

significant new revenue more fairly by applying higher rates to people with higher incomes.”

The Illinois Economic Policy Institute said lawmakers should look to neighboring states for revenue ideas. Illinois has higher average household incomes, educational attainment and home values than Wisconsin, Indiana and Iowa, but collects a lower share of income in taxes.

“The key components of Wisconsin’s tax code, if applied to Illinois,” the study pointed out, “would raise \$8.3 billion in additional state revenues.”

# No go for anti-worker Supreme Court case

*Workers' rights remain at risk as anti-union forces regroup*

**O**n March 29, a 4-4 ruling of the U.S. Supreme Court let stand a lower court decision in the *Friedrichs v. California Teachers Association* case, rejecting a lawsuit bankrolled by anti-worker forces to weaken unions.

IN SEEKING TO OUTLAW FAIR SHARE FEES AND REQUIRE UNIONS TO REPRESENT EMPLOYEES who refuse to contribute toward the cost of that representation, the forces behind the *Friedrichs* challenge are trying to drastically weaken the role of unions in the public sector.

Oral arguments in the case were heard in January and based on the questioning there, most analysts believed the Court's decision would deal a giant blow to public employees and their unions. But after the death of conservative U.S. Supreme Court Justice Antonin Scalia, the prospects changed significantly.

The Court's divided decision in late March means this concerted effort to undermine collective bargaining has failed—for now.

## Bent on destroying unions in the public sector

THE WEALTHY SPECIAL INTERESTS that are out to destroy workers' right to a voice on the job will not stop. They will continue to use the courts to try to strip away those rights, including by pushing anti-worker appointments to the Supreme Court. At the same time, they will continue to press for passage of anti-worker legislation at the state and local levels.

It's no secret that Gov. Rauner is pushing an anti-worker, anti-union agenda in Illinois. In fact, he submitted an amicus brief under the auspices of his office in the *Friedrichs* case, advocating for finding Fair Share fees unconstitutional.

An earlier Supreme Court ruling known as *Harris v. Quinn* already outlawed such fees for "independent providers" such as home health aides and child care workers.

Unions have dramatically improved the wages and benefits of these in-home care providers over the past 20 years. But they

still remain some of the lowest-paid workers in our society. Now right-wing forces are trying to put the brakes on the progress they've made by weakening the unions that represent them.

The Freedom Foundation, an organization bankrolled by the uber-rich in the Pacific Northwest, has been systematically targeting these union members in Washington and Oregon in an effort to defund their unions.

Representatives of the foundation have visited the homes of more than 10,000 union members in those two states and attempted to persuade them not to pay union dues.

"These groups are telling union members that if they leave their union, they will save money and won't lose anything," said Tracey Abman, associate director of AFSCME Council 31. "We know that's a lie: Our ability to come together to improve our lives is what's really at stake."

**"Friedrichs may have failed, but there are similar efforts in the pipeline. We must make our union stronger than ever."**

Illinois is next up on the Freedom Foundation's list—especially if the Supreme Court rules Fair Share fees unconstitutional for all public employees.

"We won't be satisfied with anything short of total victory against the government union thugs," said the foundation's CEO, Tom McCabe, in a fundraising letter. (By "government union thugs," he means every public sector union member.)

"*Friedrichs* may have failed," warned Abman, "but there are similar efforts in the pipeline, including from our own governor. We must continue to mobilize and make our union stronger than ever."



When the U.S. Supreme Court heard oral arguments in *Friedrichs v. California Teachers Association* earlier this year, hundreds of workers—including AFSCME Local 2081 President Stephen Mittons (left)—assembled outside the court to demand an end to the attacks against working families.

## State Museum continued from page 9

Unfortunately, the bill died after museum supporters were unable to secure the votes needed to override the amendatory veto, and the arbitration case was decided against the union.

But AFSCME isn't giving up the fight. The union is working with Sen. Manar to craft another bill and planning to appeal the arbitrator's ruling in circuit court.

## Technology Consolidation

The Rauner Administration has begun a major reorganization of the state's information technology functions, which many fear is an attempt to bring in politically connected contractors.

The initiative to consolidate technology functions in a single agency—the new Department of Information Technology (DoIT)—will require IT employees in several different agencies to transfer.

AFSCME will bargain with the state to seek to prevent any negative impact on affected employees and to minimize the potential for disruption in operations.

Rauner is also attempting to create a public-private partnership within the Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity. About 10 other states have given control of their commerce agencies, which in part provide oversight of state-granted business incentives, to the businesses that stand to benefit from them. Both liberal and conservative watchdog groups warn that this practice has led to mismanagement and corruption.

# SHORT REPORTS

## Illinois Supreme Court rules on Chicago pensions and state back pay

THE STATE'S HIGHEST COURT issued two decisions of great importance to union members on March 24.

First, affirming a lower court ruling, the court struck down legislation that cut the modest pensions of retired City of Chicago employees and required active employees to pay more, only to receive a diminished benefit when they retire.

The successful challenge was brought by several active and retired City of Chicago employees and their four unions—AFSCME Council 31, the Chicago Teachers Union, the Illinois Nurses Association and Teamsters Local 700.

"Today's ruling strengthens the promise of dignity in retirement for those who serve our communities, and reinforces the Illinois Constitution, our state's highest law," the four unions said in a statement.

"Politicians caused the pension crisis, not workers who have been faithfully paying their share," said Mary Jones, the main plaintiff in the case and a City of Chicago retiree. "This ruling makes it crystal clear that the politicians who got us in this mess can't dump their responsibility on public service workers and retirees."

On the same morning, the Supreme Court reversed earlier circuit and appellate court decisions regarding back wages owed to state employees, ruling that the wages are not owed in the absence of a legislative appropriation.

The back pay issue arose in July 2011 when then-Governor Pat Quinn refused to pay wage increases that the union had previously agreed to temporarily defer in light of the state's fiscal challenges at the time.

"We are shocked by this ruling," said AFSCME Council 31 Executive Director Roberta Lynch. "This case is about the principle that someone who works for a living should be paid what they are owed for the work they have done. It is also about the integrity of state government, whether it will live up to the terms when it enters into a contract."

"We did the work. We showed up every day. We put

ourselves in harm's way for the people of Illinois," said Shaun Dawson, a correctional sergeant at Logan Correctional Center and president of AFSCME Local 2073. "And now the State of Illinois has chosen to neglect their obligations."

Some 24,000 employees of the Illinois Department of Corrections, Human Services, Juvenile Justice, Natural Resources and Public Health are still owed an average of \$2,500 each.

As On the Move went to press, AFSCME Council 31 was working on legislation to enact an appropriation that pays the workers for work they performed nearly five years ago.

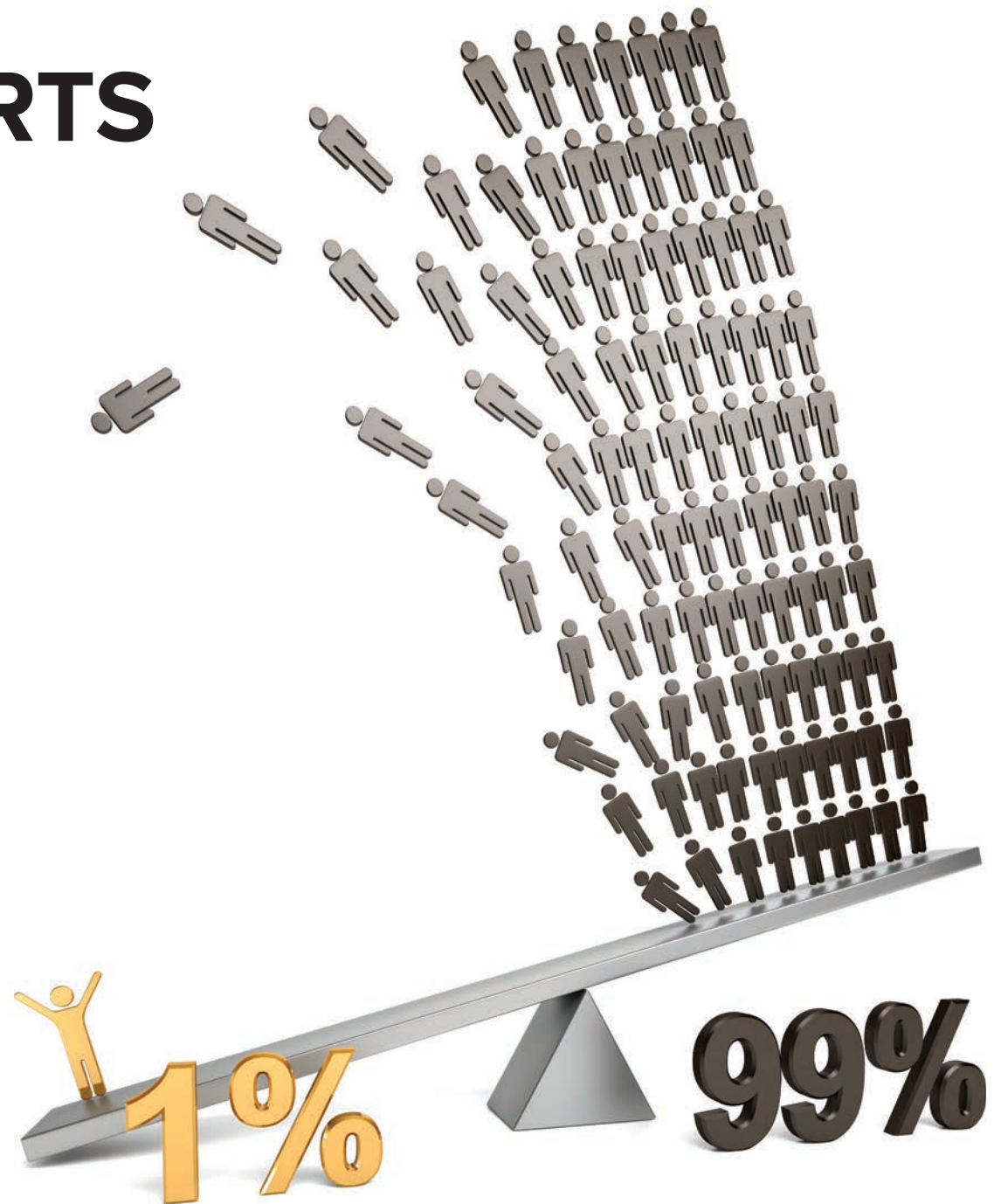
"Our union will not give up this fight," Lynch said.

## Illinois economy out of balance

ILLINOIS WAS A MUCH DIFFERENT place in the 1960s.

At that time, home values for the top one percent of earners were just two times higher than the median home value. And the top one percent of workers was paid three times more than the median worker.

If those numbers don't sound so great, you will be wishing it was 1960 when you hear the situation today.



Home values for the top one percent of earners in Illinois are now seven times more than the median and that one percent are paid at least 14 times more than the median worker.

These trends and more were reported in a study by the Illinois Economic Policy Institute, *The History of Economic Inequality in Illinois*.

The study points to the increasingly unbalanced

economy in Illinois. Since 1980, the share of the state's wealth that goes to workers has steadily shrunk while the share that goes to capital has steadily grown.

## AFSCME members elected to SERS Board of Trustees

The State Employees' Retirement System (SERS) Board of Trustees is responsible for overseeing the operation of the pension system that provides benefits to more than 140,000 active and retired state employees.

The board consists of 13 members: the Illinois Comptroller, six trustees appointed by the Governor, four active trustees elected by SERS members, and two trustees elected by SERS retirees.

This year, three of the four active trustee seats were up for election. AFSCME supported strong candidates to fill these seats, and all three were elected.

Rob Fanti, president of AFSCME Local 472 and current SERS Member Trustee, won re-election to serve another term on the Board. Stephen Mittons, president of AFSCME Local 2081, and Jeremy "Tad" Hawk, president of AFSCME Local 1805, were chosen to fill two vacant seats—one of which had been held by recently-retired longtime SERS trustee and AFSCME leader Pat Ousley.



Rob Fanti



Jeremy "Tad" Hawk



Stephen Mittons

The new trustees join AFSCME Local 805 President David Morris on the board.

Running for the open annuitant seat is John Tilden, an AFSCME retiree and executive board member from Lake County. There is another candidate vying for the seat, so there will be an election. Ballots will be mailed to SERS retirees on May 1 and are due back to SERS by June 1.

# RETIREE NOTES

## Protect our pensions: Vote in SERS trustee election

ALL RETIREES IN THE STATE Employees Retirement System (SERS) are eligible to vote in the upcoming election for Annuitant Trustee. AFSCME recommends John Tilden for this position. The voting period begins on May 1 and runs through June 1, 2016.

“When retirees receive their SERS ballot on or around May 1, they should mark it for John Tilden,” said David Amerson, Chapter 31 retiree coordinator.

An experienced and proven advocate for retirement security, John Tilden serves as the president of AFSCME Retiree Sub-chapter 66 (Lake and McHenry County) and on the statewide executive board for Chapter 31. He is retired from the Illinois Department of Human Services where he worked as a psychologist for more than 30 years.

At a time when public pension systems are threatened, it is critical that SERS members have a voice in the decisions that affect their retirement. Tilden serves on the finance and legislative committees of Chapter 31. He knows that politicians mismanaging pension funding caused the SERS to be underfunded—not retirees who faithfully paid their contribution every month.

Ballots must be received at SERS by June 1. Retirees must follow voting instructions exactly to ensure every vote is counted.

## Retirees help secure big wins in primary election

IN TWO OF THE MOST HOTLY contested elections of the March primary, AFSCME Chapter 31 retirees led the grassroots charge that resulted in big wins for union-backed candidates.

In Springfield, where AFSCME-backed incumbent senator Sam McCann was running against a Rauner super PAC backed challenger, volunteers called their fellow AFSCME retirees and knocked on doors in the 50th District to help get out the vote.

“Sam was the only Republican in the General Assembly

VOTE FOR  
**JOHN TILDEN**  
in the SERS Annuitant  
Trustee election.

BALLOTS ARE MAILED MAY 1.



with the courage to stand up to Bruce Rauner’s destructive agenda,” said Don Todd, president of Retiree Sub-chapter 86 (Sangamon County). “We wanted to send a message to other Republicans that you don’t have to be afraid of all the campaign cash Rauner and his buddies are spending on elections. Union activism can beat dirty money any day of the week.”

In Chicago, AFSCME-backed challenger Juliana Stratton was running against incumbent state representative Ken Dunkin. AFSCME Retiree Sub-chapter 60 (Chicago) staffed some of the first phone banks to get the word out about Stratton.

“When we needed Ken Dunkin the most, he was out of town on vacation,” said Mary Jones, president of the Chicago sub-chapter, referring to Dunkin’s absence from a veto override vote on SB 1229, which caused the fair arbitration bill to fail. “Dunkin stood with Rauner against active and retired public employees, so now we stand together against Dunkin.”

## Failing 401(k) plans reaching national crisis

WHEN FIRST INTRODUCED, defined contribution retirement plans known as 401(k) plans were intended to be one leg of a “three-legged stool” along with Social Security and pensions.

The decline of defined benefit worker pensions coupled with steady cuts to Social Security since the 1980s mean

that retired Americans are more and more dependent on their personal savings and 401(k) accounts. But an alarming new study by the Economic Policy Institute points to the widespread failure of 401(k)s to provide retirement security.

Almost half of all working-age families have no money in retirement accounts at all, according to the study, with the median amount of savings being a paltry \$5,000. Even older workers approaching

retirement have little to show for their 401(k), with people between the ages of 56 and 61 having a median retirement savings of only \$17,000.

Mirroring the national conversation on wealth inequality, the study found massive inequality in retirement savings, with the wealthiest ten percent saving over \$274,000 and the bottom 50 percent saving next to nothing.

Disparities in retirement savings result from stagnating wages as well as decreasing

employer participation in retirement benefit plans for their workers. Americans with lower incomes are ten times less likely than families with higher incomes to have jobs that offer 401(k) plans.

Originally designed to supplement the retirement income workers received from Social Security and their pensions, 401(k)s have been used to replace pensions.

One of the main reasons that 401(k)s are so popular, despite their widespread failure, is that they are extremely lucrative for Wall Street fund managers and other big money interests: 401(k) plans carry much higher fees and administrative overhead. In order to protect their own profits, these fund managers and banks use their wealth to push for policies that attack traditional pension plans.

“The EPI study is the latest in a growing pile of evidence that 401(k)s have failed working families in America,” said Bailey Childers, Executive Director of the National Public Pension Coalition. “It’s more vital than ever to protect and expand access to defined benefit pensions—the best vehicle to provide real retirement security.”



AFSCME retiree Eva Gregory volunteers with her fellow Sub-chapter 60 members at a union phone bank to support Juliana Stratton in Chicago.

# Partial settlement with City of Rockford

*Head Start and Housing Authority employees still at the bargaining table*

**M**ore than 170 members of AFSCME Local 1058 settled a two-year contract with the City of Rockford at the end of 2015 with a two percent raise retroactive to 2015 and an additional two percent raise in 2016.

DUE TO THE GOVERNOR'S REFUSAL TO ENACT A FAIR BUDGET, STATE FUNDING TO ROCKFORD and other local governments has been withheld for months, prompting the city to stipulate a wage reopener that either party can request this spring.

When Democratic legislators pushed through a bill in February to start funds flowing to local governments again, the governor finally bowed to pressure and signed the measure. But it's not clear how long that funding will continue, given the ongoing budgetary impasse in Springfield.

"We're all being held hostage by our governor," said Garry Cacciapaglia, president of the local. "Holding the budget hostage to eliminate collective bargaining rights isn't just hurting union employees, it's hurting all workers and the people

who depend on public services."

The new contract covers Rockford's public works team, finance staff, 911 dispatchers, police records staff, building inspectors, land use planners, code enforcement officers and more.

"Our local wants to give our members and *all* working people in Rockford a step up so they can sustain their families," Cacciapaglia said. "It's up to us to make our city better."

## Head Start staff held back

WHILE THE MAJORITY OF THE local has been able to reach an agreement that members believe is fair, two units are not yet guaranteed much-needed wage increases for their families—employees at Rockford Head Start and the Rockford



Local 1058 stands in solidarity as some units still negotiate.

Housing Authority.

For 16 years Kristen Hughes has taught children and supported families in Rockford's Head Start early education program. She teaches at-risk preschoolers and cultivates relationships with her students' families to ensure each child's growth and development.

"The relationship we have with the families really sets us apart from other preschool programs," said Hughes. "We meet them at home or on their lunch hour at work. We do anything we can so families can help their child succeed."

Hughes, a member of the AFSCME Local 1058C bargaining team, is very upset by ongoing contract negotiations with

the city.

While the city agreed to four percent raises over two years for other employees, Head Start workers were offered nothing for 2015, and just 1.75 percent for 2016.

The city maintained that larger raises were not an option for Head Start employees because the program's budget is contingent on federal funding.

But Hughes points out that under Mayor Larry Morrissey, Rockford's financial investment in Head Start has gone from \$700,000 annually to zero. Difficulty recruiting new hires and retaining staff now plagues the vital program, leading many to conclude it is targeted for closure.

On March 8, teachers, family support specialists, bus drivers and other staff in the program voted overwhelmingly to reject the city's offer.

Hughes and her co-workers work hard to meet the needs of each child and help them develop and learn.

"These kids deserve the best of us," she said. "And that's what we give every day."

## Rockford Housing Authority still in negotiations

MEMBERS OF AFSCME LOCAL 1058A who work as property managers, maintenance staff and family support specialists for the Rockford Housing Authority (RHA) are also still at the bargaining table attempting to reach a fair settlement.

Elias Soria, the local's chair representing the housing authority employees, has worked as a family self-sufficiency specialist for 18 years, assisting and encouraging

tenant families to improve their lives. He believes that the work he and his co-workers do is irreplaceable.

"It's the little triumphs that make me so happy," he said. "The person getting their GED after years of trying. The child making it through high school without getting involved in gang activity. These stories make me come back ready to work harder the next day."

AFSCME members at RHA have been working nearly a year without a contract. Similar to the situation with Head Start, RHA administrators have received significant raises while management is offering very little to frontline staff like Soria.

Bargaining sessions are set for late March.



Members of Rockford's AFSCME Local 1058 occupy City Hall during their contract campaign.

## AFSCME Local 1058 Bargaining Committees

Negotiations led by AFSCME Council 31 Staff Representative Ed Sadlowski, Local 1058 President Garry Cacciapaglia and Local Vice President Christina Loudermilk.

**City of Rockford**  
 Brian Collins  
 Leonard Cassaro, Jr.  
 Ron Reinagle  
 Leandro Garcia  
 Heather Swartz, Secretary  
 Treasurer  
 Denise Bell  
 Robert Rever

**Rockford Housing Authority**  
 Elias Soria, Chapter Chair  
 Monique Jones, Secretary  
 William Thompson  
 Lynne Feirn  
 Linda Lander

**Community Development**  
 Ned Friel, Chapter Chair  
 Jason Applegate  
 Darius Morrow

**Head Start**  
 Kristen Hughes,  
 Recording Secretary  
 Traci Madison  
 Kay Ellen Ditomassi  
 Melody Harris  
 Dan Koeninger

# ON THE LOCAL LEVEL

## Granite City Library employees stand firm

PAT CARNEY PERFORMS BUILDING maintenance at the Granite City Library. A steward on the AFSCME Local 3405 bargaining committee, Carney helped negotiate raises and contract improvements for the library system's 35 full- and part-time employees.

"I like to fix things," said Carney. "That's what I do." For the 35 librarian aides, desk assistants, custodians and maintenance staff, the fixes in their new three-year contract include a raise of more than a dollar an hour over the next three years while maintaining health care and protecting seniority rights of part-time workers.

Denise Owens and Rebecca Bohling joined Carney on the bargaining committee, which was led by AFSCME Council 31 staff representative Ed LaPorte.

## Randolph County's Circuit Clerk employees move forward

A NEW CONTRACT FOR CIRCUIT clerk employees in Randolph

County will provide raises of more than eight percent over three years. It came about in part because the employer—county clerk Sherry Johnson—knows from personal experience that frontline workers are essential to getting the job done. After all, Johnson was an AFSCME member in the same office herself for 25 years before her election to the top post three years ago.

"I know first-hand how hard these employees work," Johnson said. "They know their jobs and they perform them very well. They deserve everything they got."

"Everything in this court starts and ends in our office," said Cheri Buchheit, a 30-year employee who served on the bargaining committee. "The job is never boring—every day there's something new and interesting."

In addition to raises, Buchheit pushed to expand sick and bereavement leave provisions to include grandchildren and step-grandchildren. Unable to take paid time off when her granddaughter died last year, she wanted to make sure fellow employees never face that situation.



Randolph County Circuit Clerk Sherry Johnson, AFSCME Council 31 Staff Representative Patricia Rensing and Local 2402 negotiator Cheri Buchheit celebrate their new agreement.

AFSCME Council 31 staff representative Patricia Rensing led the negotiations.

## Blue Island city employees negotiate changing terrain

NEWLY ELECTED CITY LEADERSHIP in Blue Island made negotiating a new union contract more complicated, but the AFSCME Local 1172 bargaining committee representing 26 public works, water department and police clerical employees in Blue Island stood strong for more than a year of negotiations that ultimately involved a federal mediator.

*"The whole committee fought really hard to get something for everybody."*

Phil Bretz, Local 1172

In the end they unanimously ratified an agreement with significant improvements in overtime compensation and 2.25 percent increases in each year of the three-year agreement.

"Improved overtime language will be better for our family life," said Phil Bretz, a heavy equipment operator, 20-year union member and president of the local.

Retroactive to 2014, the contract ensures that retired members get back wages owed for their service.

Bob Athans and Christine Papierski joined Bretz on the bargaining committee, which was led by Council 31 staff representative Ken Anderson.

"Everybody was happy with the agreement," Bretz said. "The whole committee fought really hard to get something for everybody."

## Village of Bensenville makes strides

PUBLIC WORKS EMPLOYEES, police clerical staff and other clerical workers in the Village of Bensenville won wage increases of more than eight percent over two and a half years retroactive to May 2015.

The 35 members of AFSCME Local 1167 will also enjoy an additional holiday secured by the bargaining team.

The bargaining team included President John Jackson, Vice President Robert Weipert, Recording Secretary Maria Meza, Eugene Giannola, Jr. and Karolee Beer, and was led by Council 31 staff representative Richard Berg.



Members of AFSCME Local 3405 work in the Granite City Library.

### Shelby County employees determined to fight for more

THE SHELBY COUNTY BOARD received a silent but powerful message from employees in a board meeting last fall, when members of AFSCME Local 3323 protesting stalled negotiations filed into the crowded board room and stood silently for 10 minutes.

The board had recently requested a federal mediator to assist with negotiations, a tactical move that employees opposed.

"We couldn't believe it," Local 3323 President Debbie Dunaway told the Decatur Herald and Review. "We've had such a good relationship over 30 years between the county and the union that it was unbelievable to us they would ask for mediation."

Members were prepared to take a strike authorization vote before management was finally willing to settle. The 23 members of the 100% union local are ready to push for more at the bargaining table in 2018.

Dunaway was joined on the committee by Vice President Charlie Evans, Secretary-Treasurer Mary Jo Curry, Christina Hewing, Lisa Swenny, Beth Musser and John Agney, led by Council 31 staff representative David Beck.

### Fair deal for Village of Streamwood employees

THE 36-PERSON PUBLIC WORKS team at the Village of Streamwood won a new three-year union contract with 2.5 percent annual raises.

"I thought negotiations were very fair," said Local 909 President Mike Peco, who serves as foreman for buildings and grounds. Peco has worked for the village for 33 years.

"Everything was above board and we made a good deal," he said. "It is the best contract we've bargained in years."

**"It's the best contract we've bargained in years."**

Mike Peco, Local 909

In addition to maintaining health care coverage, members also won increases in both the uniform and tool allowances and increased "pager pay" by 33



Members of AFSCME Local 3323 protest at the Shelby County Board meeting, making a stand for a fair contract.

percent.

"Each week someone is on call by pager 24 hours a day," said Peco. "We negotiated an increase in our on-call time to \$100 a week."

Negotiations were completed in three sessions and an overwhelming majority voted to approve the contract.

In addition to Peco, the bargaining team included Vice President Ed Crumlett and past president Brian Smith, and was led by Council 31 staff representative Richard Berg.

### A brighter future for Fulton County employees

SOMETHING WAS IN THE AIR THIS year in Fulton County. AFSCME Local 3433 members in the courthouse and the circuit clerk's office won fair agreements in just one bargaining session, and county nursing home employees won their best contract in years.

But the positive results of negotiations are not about any mysterious substances, local president Trudy Williams said. Instead she pointed to the role of County Chair Bob Bucher in improving labor-management relations.

"When the governor was going around trying to push his Turnaround Agenda, the chairman wore his retiree Carpenters union jacket to the meeting," Williams explained. "His union background makes a lot of

difference."

The 42 courthouse and circuit clerk employees won annual raises totaling more than six percent over three years.

At the Clayberg Nursing Home, residents are served by 62 certified nursing assistants, licensed practical nurses and kitchen, maintenance and janitorial staff who won raises of nearly six percent for the final three years of a new four-year contract. They also received a cash bonus of \$400 for full-time and \$200 for part-time employees, retroactive to 2014.

Going forward, the agreement provides for the unit's first-ever shift differential, paying employees more for working the second or third shifts.

**"The shift differential will make a big difference in our members' lives."**

Trudy Williams,  
Local 3433

"This was a huge thing for our members," said Williams. "The shift differential will make a big difference in their lives; it's effectively a raise on top of the annual increase."

President Williams and Council 31 staff representative Randy Lynch led bargaining for all three units. Courthouse bargaining team members also included Anita Mann, Reba Ford and Mary Ellen Carmack.

Circuit clerk bargaining team members included Secretary Becky Waddell and Treasurer Charlene Markley. Robert Mueller, Dorinda Ford, Mary Pollite, Becky Mae and Lynda Bailey joined the nursing home bargaining team.

### Glendale Heights employees stood up for fair contract

POLICE CLERICALS AND DISPATCHERS, community service office workers, and employees at the sports hub and the senior center came together to win a fair contract in Glendale Heights.

The 65 members of Local 3768 pressed the village board to do the right thing, wearing green and speaking out at board meetings.

Ten months of tough negotiations resulted in two-percent annual raises in a three-year agreement.

"We beat back the so-called Rauner clause that would have reduced our increases if the governor introduces any kind of restrictions on local government fund distributions," Council 31 staff representative Richard Berg said.

In addition, the contract provides a wage incentive, severance provisions including health coverage, and job transfer rights for employees facing layoff due to the scheduled closure of the village's 911 dispatch center.

Berg led the union bargaining team that included President Connie Sevcik, Vice President Jennifer Hopwood, Judy Kupka, Mike Marron and Tony Rickard.

### Public works team in Round Lake Beach makes gains

ROUND LAKE BEACH EMPLOYEES hoped to keep negotiations simple and they succeeded, settling a fair contract in just one bargaining session.

**"We decided to focus on getting a good wage increase, and we got a 10 percent raise."**

Mario Ingoglio, Local 347

"We decided to focus on getting a good wage increase," Local 347 President Mario Ingoglio said by phone as he repaired a water meter, "and we got a 10 percent raise over the four years. Everybody is very happy with the contract."

Besides Ingoglio, the bargaining committee led by Council 31 staff representative Christopher Hooser also included Vice President Denise Schotanus and Secretary Donald Lauritzen.

# Unions

*help create*

# Miracles

Noah Jones was born on February 3, 2016, to two adoring parents: Nick and Megan Jones.

Nick is a correctional officer at Dixon Correctional Center and a member of AFSCME Local 817. He and his wife Megan, a law office manager in DeKalb, had struggled to conceive a baby for nine years before Noah finally arrived.

"It's the American dream to have a home, make a life and have a baby with someone you love," said Megan. "To be told it might not happen... that's hard."

Fortunately for this family, Nick's union membership affords them excellent family health care that covers in vitro fertilization (IVF), a complex process that assists with conception.

"Honestly, if we would have had to pay out of pocket, there would have been no way," said Nick. "Just one round of IVF is more than \$20,000." Nick and Megan had to undergo three rounds of IVF before Noah was conceived.

"Without the benefits of Nick's union job," said Megan, "we wouldn't have our baby. We're beyond thankful."

Nick worries that if Governor Rauner gets his way and slashes health care coverage for state employees, other families won't have the same opportunities.

"If it wasn't for all the people who fight and sacrifice their time with their families to negotiate our contracts, we wouldn't have our son right now," he said. "With all the attacks from Rauner and a presidential election coming up, it's more important than ever for workers to stick together."

Health care isn't the only union-won benefit that helps new parents like Nick and Megan. Nick's contract includes four weeks of paternity leave.

"We are blessed to have time to figure out this new parent thing together," said Megan.

The joy of these precious weeks emanates from both Nick's and Megan's voices. But the new dad and mom admit they aren't sleeping very much.

"We read all the books. We felt ready. But the most surprising thing is how little sleep you really get," said Megan, as Nick chuckled in agreement. "Coffee is our new best friend."



 **AFSCME Council 31**  
February 6, 2016

"This is a picture of me and my newborn son, Noah. Due to infertility problems, we had to conceive Noah through IVF. IVF is not a cheap or simple process, and if it weren't for the wage I make and the excellent health coverage we currently have, we would not have been able to do it. If it were not for all the hard-working union members and all those who fought to get us a fair wage and the benefits we have, this little guy would not be here. From the bottom of my heart and my new family, I can only say simply, thank you."

— Nick Jones, correctional officer at Dixon and member of AFSCME Local 817



49,704 people reached

1k+ likes, 167 shares, 57 comments

*A new family enjoys their first weeks together, helped by a union contract*

When Nick Jones posted a photo of his new baby with this message of thanks to his fellow union members, notes of support came pouring in. Co-workers, friends and fellow AFSCME members around the state congratulated the new dad and also shared their own stories about how union health care helped them start and care for their own families.